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Cordelia Lutheran Church

by Larry Lass

Friends of Cordelia welcomes you to this historic church.

Please sign the Guest Registry and take this pamphlet home for further reading and as a remembrance of your visit to the past.



Cordelia Lutheran is the oldest Lutheran building in the state (established in 1883). The church was home to the first Swedish congregation in Idaho, organized in 1880 by Rev. Peter Carlson. The congregation was known as "The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Cordelia, Nez Perce County, Idaho Territory" but history has shortened it to Cordelia Lutheran.



Carlson

Andrew S. Olson donated one acre of land from his homestead and sold an additional acre for the cemetery for \$25. The congregation raised \$295.55 for construction from members, non-members, other churches and local businesses.

The cost of materials used in construction was \$72.83.

Lumber for the structure was purchased from Northrup and Moore Lumber Company of Lenville, Idaho for \$31.26. The wood for the flooring and ceiling was purchased from Henry Skeels Lumber for \$5.45. In 1883, Skeels' saw mill was located 8 miles east of Moscow, Idaho. Wood for the pews and trim cost \$4.50. Paint (\$16.00), a broom (\$0.62), nails (\$1.00) and other hardware were purchased from business in Lewiston. Construction started in October and was completed in late December 1883 and the covered entryway was added in 1884.

The charter member families of the congregation were C.P. Anderson, C.J. Linquist, Isaak Linquist, O. Westendahl, Julius Schumacher, John W. Carlson, Andrew E. Carlson, John Turner, E.G. Peterson, Edwin Peterson, Carl Andrew Hagstrom, and Peter Mortenson.

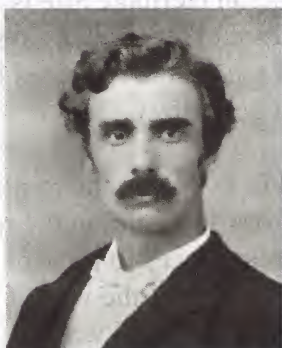
The basic structure of the church and cemetery remains almost intact in the original state. All but two pews were in the 1883 church and there was a pump organ.



Cordelia Lutheran 1903

The pulpit was added in 1903. A horse shed and pit toilets were on the property. The cemetery had more graves than the five presently known (four headstones). Several graves were moved when the church stopped holding services in 1918. In 1995, the church was placed on the National Registry of Historic Places.

Pastors serving Cordelia included Peter Carlson (1880-1892), Carl A. Ramstedt (1892-1894), Carl J. Beckman (1894-1900), N.J.W. Nelson (1900-1909), George A. Johnson (1909-1917), and John Oslund (1917-1918). Pastors serving Cordelia also served Zion Lutheran of Moscow, the old name for First Lutheran now merged into Emmanuel Lutheran.



Ramstedt



Beckman



Nelson



Johnson



Oslund

The church has been rescued many times by the Swedish Lutheran community and other Friends of Cordelia. In 1938 the church was sold for \$75 for destruction, but members of the First Lutheran in Moscow (Victor Ramstedt, C.B. Green, Frank Gustafson, Gust Anderson and others) saved the church and funded needed repairs.

A complete restoration was funded in 1948 by the daughter of Andrew S. Olson, Mrs. Frances Olson Graham. Andrew donated the original one-acre building site in 1883. During the 1948 restoration two pews were



Graham

added where the stove should have been, all four windows were replaced and shutters added to protect the windows, the lower half of the siding on the west side was replaced, the interior was repainted and the wallpaper was replaced. Documentation of the restoration does not mention the his and hers

church, but the hinges and signs are consistent with 1940-era carpentry. The cemetery stones were set upright.

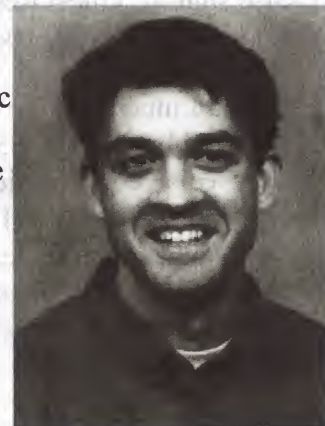


Cordelia Church 1948

Care for the church shifted from First Lutheran to Troy Lutheran about 1960. Members of Troy Lutheran replaced the roof and painted the church. Sometime in the 70's the metal rod was added to the church for more wall support and to reduce the impact of the settling foundation. The church was regularly cleaned by members of Troy Lutheran Church who also held picnics at the church. In 1979, members of Troy Lutheran Church noticed the church was not really built

on the one acre given by Olson. The small land swap happened in 1982 to prevent the need to move the church 20 feet to the east. In the late 1980's there were two attempts to purchase and move the church to a pioneer park in Texas and to Elk River.

Michael Houser, a student at the University of Idaho, came to the church's rescue with a senior project about the historic church. Michael was instrumental in transferring the deed for Cordelia from ELCA Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod to Emmanuel Lutheran Church. In 1992, the stone footings to the building were replaced with concrete pilings and the lower half of the west side was resided. The outside of the church was painted. Michael's project stimulated the formation of Friends of Cordelia and a trust fund was established for restoration and maintenance.



Houser

Mrs. Beverly Walker Innocenti came to the latest rescue of the Cordelia Church in 1993. Beverly provided funds



Innocenti

to purchase 35 acres (south and west) of the church (currently farm ground) and provided seed funds for a building and well. Her vision for the property involved adult education and recreation facilities. The 254 feet well to the west of the Church was drilled in 1996, but was found insufficient (5 gallon/minute) for a major building project.

In 1994, Friends of Cordelia and Emmanuel Lutheran signed a management agreement. The agreement was updated in 2013 to develop a framework for preserving Cordelia Lutheran Church for future generation as a Lutheran Heritage Site. A Lutheran Heritage Site is defined as a non-commercial place to remember days of old and consider generations of the past as reflected by interest in theology, history and genealogy.

Steps to the church were added in 1994 and the roof was replaced. In 1996, the trusts (cross supports) in the roof were strengthened with more cross braces to prevent further sagging of the roof and bowing of the walls. The organ was busted up by vandals in 1997 and was

reassembled. Also in 1997, a fire in the church damaged a bible and small wooden stand on the pulpit.

In 2001, the west side of the church was again repainted and glass was replace in the southwest window. In the spring of 2002, Alben Person's tomb stone reappeared. The stone was present for the August 2000 Cemetery Census, but gone in 2001. A guest registry was added to the church for visitors to sign, and this information pamphlet was published to help visitors understand the history of the church. Picnic tables were also added, buildings painted, and graves tended. In 2003, the inside window and door frames were repainted and headstone for Charles was reset on the pedestal. In 2004, a parking lot was added. In 2007, the shutter on the southwest window was repaired. A hand pump for the well was added in 2008 and the exterior of church was painted. Reproduction wallpaper matching the original 1883 pattern was installed in 2009. In 2011, the inside window and door frames were repainted. A flicker caused major damage to the siding on the SW corner of the church in 2012, additional drumming boxes were added and siding repaired. In the fall of 2012, a bur oak tree was planted to provide additional shade.

In 2014, we replaced more siding on the west side of the church and repainted areas that pealed on the south and west sides of the church. The flooring in the entryway was replaced in 2015 and in the outhouse in 2017.

In 2015, Emmanuel Lutheran took steps to evaluate land holdings and funds to refocus their ministry. Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council expressed an interest to sell at least half, if not all, of the acreage of Cordelia and to use funds donated to/for Cordelia to fund the new ministry. After discovering their intent, Friends of Cordelia took steps toward purchasing the 35-acre property and historic Cordelia.

The Friends of Cordelia Board believed it was necessary to obtain ownership and sever relations with Emmanuel Lutheran. We wanted to keep the lands associated with Cordelia as one parcel and saw the value of Cordelia as an historic site for all to enjoy.

In 2018, Emmanuel Lutheran agrees to sell Cordelia and land gifted to Cordelia to Friends of Cordelia. We are excited Emmanuel's vote was unanimous and without discussion. The sale price for Cordelia was \$90,000 for both building and associated land. Funds for purchase came from interest and dividends on investments and farm income. The title was transferred on April 20,

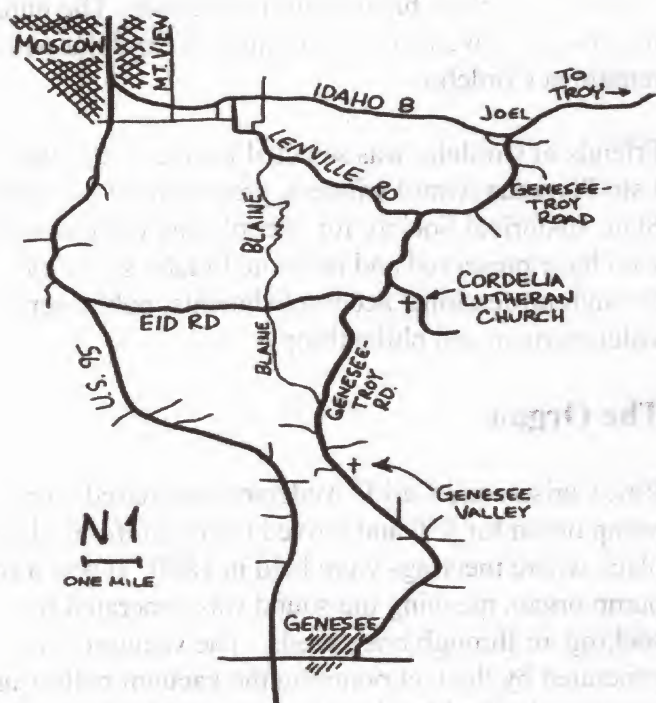
2018. It is a clean break from Emmanuel. The purchase insures gifts given for preservation of Cordelia will remain at Cordelia.

Friends of Cordelia was selected for the 2019 class of Esto Perpetua Award winners, presented by the Idaho State Historical Society for "people and organizations who have preserved and promoted Idaho's history through professional accomplishments, public service or volunteerism, and philanthropy.

The Organ

Rev. Carlson and Carl P. Anderson purchased a used pump organ for \$50 and moved the organ from place to place where meetings were held in 1880. It was a reed pump organ, meaning the sound was generated by sucking air through brass reeds. The vacuum was generated by the feet pumping the vacuum bellow and regulated by the knee board, stops, and keyboard. The reed organ was invented in 1835 and was commonly used in homes and small churches from 1860 to 1920. Shortly after the church was disbanded it has been told that part of the organ was sold. It was reported in the Spokane Review on May 30, 1948 that "mice had made shambles of the interior of the little organ, eating the felt padding and ivory keys had been torn away." In 1948 the lid exposing the inside of the organ was made to hinge, but it did not work properly in 1991. Extensive damage to the organ in the summer of 1997 was consistent with someone sitting or falling on it.

Structural repairs were made, but damages described in 1948 were extensive and the organ would never play music again. A functional pump organ was donated to Cordelia on April 7, 2007 by John Elwood and Sally Burkhart. The organ was built by Clough and Warren Company of Detroit Michigan in about 1883. The disassembled organ was found in the basement of a Goodwill Store near Bellingham, Washington by their son who restored the instrument. The organ dedication concert was held on September 23, 2007. There is a hymnal in the music storage box at the top of the organ. Pull out some stops and feel free to play something.



Cordelia Church Membership and Donations. on the Web

Visit our website to join our email list serve, make a donation, or find more more history and information about activities at Cordelia Church.

[HTTP://cordeliachurch.org](http://cordeliachurch.org)

Like us on Facebook at Cordelia Lutheran Church to receive current event and other happenings at Cordelia.

Mailing address:

Friends of Cordelia
P.O. Box 8284
Moscow, ID 83843

The church remains open to visitors. Cordelia Lutheran is available for weddings, vow renewals, and family gatherings. Visit our website at cordeliachurch.org for information, become a member (Membership is FREE) and to make a donation. To schedule an activity please call Larry Lass at 208-835-2652 or email cordeliachurch@gmail.com.

Other historic buildings and cemeteries close to Cordelia.

Genesee Valley Lutheran Church is the oldest Lutheran congregation in Idaho. The congregation started in 1878 as Our Savior's Lutheran, but split over theological differences into two churches (Trinity and Our Savior's). Trinity built the church (current Genesee Valley building) in 1911 and the groups merged in 1917 as Genesee Valley Lutheran Church. The church used by Our Savior's during the split was located 1/4 mile north of Genesee Valley Lutheran Church and was visible from the steps of the church. The Our Savior's and the original log church from 1878 have been torn down.

Blaine School (Eid Road and Blaine Road) is all that remains from the thriving community of 1887 that included a Methodist church, grocery store, blacksmith shop, stagecoach shop and school. Most of the houses, church and businesses disappeared in the late 1940's. The church was located just north of the school.

Buchanan Cemetery (Lenville Road about a mile east of the Genesee / Troy Road corner on the right) was started by a family who homesteaded in the area in the 1870s. In addition to the Buchanan family, many other early settlers are buried in this cemetery. Several graves came from Cordelia's cemetery when graves were moved after the church stopped holding services in 1918. Continuing down the road a mile and on the left is Aspendale school also known as the Tin Bell School, which served about 15 students from the 1920's until 1940's.

Lone Star School Replica is located 1 mile southeast of Cordelia on Danielson Road and 0.1 miles on Lone Star Road. The school was established in 1890 and used until 1936. The Lone Star Schools Replica is currently closed for repairs.

The Lenville community was located between the intersections of Campbell Loop and Magee Road along Lenville Road southeast of Aspendale a good three miles. Lenville was established in 1880 and named for Leonard Nichols, the owner of the general store. The community spread along Lenville Road for about a half mile and had a store, school, post office, church, blacksmith's shop and chop mill (grain processing mill). No buildings remain on site. The store was torn down and wood salvaged to rebuild a house destroyed by fire. The school was moved and attached to the Aspendale school in the early 1950's.